

## House Republican Press Release

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Press Office: 860-240-8700

### Happy Anniversary, Governor Rell



*by State Representative John J. Ryan*

You may have seen that the General Assembly finally got its major piece of Special Session business done after 2:00 a.m. on Wednesday morning last week, when the Transportation Bill passed. That very important issue, and discussing all of the topics from the closing weeks of the Regular Session all have to take a back seat to our observance of an important anniversary: Governor M. Jodi Rell's completion of her first year in office.

Could anyone have anticipated that any new Governor, taking office after the resignation in disgrace of her predecessor, would have done this well? Despite regular news coverage of the Rowland plea bargain, sentencing and prison stay that you would think might hang over any successor, and despite the political reality of a legislature that it overwhelmingly controlled by the Democrats (24 to 12 in the Senate, and 99 to 52 in the House), and a State government where every other constitutional officer (even your Lieutenant Governor!) is on "the other team", Rell has moved forward through her first year confidently, gracefully and effectively. Consider:

- The public clearly appreciates and values her approach; her "Open House" meetings early in her term, and then again last weekend were mobbed by long lines of the "average citizen" anxious to greet and praise her, a Quinnipiac University poll in April showed her to have an 80 per cent approval rating (highest ever in the poll for a Statewide leader);
- She has not been reluctant to 'take charge'; she re-evaluated the performance of department heads and Commissioners immediately upon taking office, and promptly replaced the heads of the DEP, the State Police, and Connecticut Development, and other changes soon followed;
- She has strongly distanced herself from her predecessor's problems by making ethics and campaign reform her highest priorities;
- She has chosen to make strong policy statements by insisting on as austere a budget as she could get, given the large Democrat legislative majorities, and proposing (and more importantly, getting enacted) the most sweeping transportation improvement package in decades;
- She understands the power and the politics of her office, having vetoed several bills (even the pet bill of Senate Leader Don Williams on 'school nutrition!') when

- they conflicted with her core values of opposing unfunded mandates and encroachments on local control by municipalities, or with the responsibilities and authority of the Governor (preserving privatization options);
- And perhaps most telling, she has conducted herself with grace, patience and poise in a difficult job under trying circumstances; have you noticed how she has ignored the outbursts of House Speaker Jim Amann, or the repeated carping of Lt. Governor Sullivan (one of the many seeking the nomination to run against her in the fall of 2006)? And is she running for re-election ? She most recently told a member of the media that while she wishes to consult at length with her family, it was "more likely than not" that she would seek re-election.

How to sum up Rell's first year as Governor? I don't usually include long quotes from others, but since this is from the Hartford Courant (and thereby unknown to lower Fairfield County readers), columnist (and former State Senator Kevin Rennie) recently said that, "Rell has spent a year smiting her doubters. They didn't think she could shake Rowland. Her charm is making him a fading memory, perhaps his worst punishment. No one thought she could get a budget with a looming deficit and hostile Democrats. She did and mostly on her terms. Some even thought breast cancer would slow and discourage her from continuing in politics. She's emerged energetic, with even a little edge."

A Governor Rell announcement of any kind is still probably weeks away. But no one can deny that her first year as Governor will stand as one of the most remarkable years for Connecticut leader in history.

Please feel free to contact me with your concerns and issues. As your state representative, it is my job, and my priority to represent you and to make sure that your needs and concerns are addressed at the capitol. You can write to me at Room 4200, Legislative Office Building, Hartford, CT 06106-1591, send me e-mail at [John.Ryan@housegop.state.ct.us](mailto:John.Ryan@housegop.state.ct.us) or call my office toll-free at 1-800-842-1423.